

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claim 1 and cancel claim 3. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An epitaxial growth furnace comprising:

a sealed chamber; and

a pair of wafer holders for holding a pair of semiconductor wafers within said chamber;

wherein formation of an epitaxial layer on a surface of each of said wafers is effected by supplying under a high temperature condition a source gas to a surface area of each of said wafers;

wherein said wafer holders are adapted to arrange said pair of wafers in such a manner that the wafers are disposed in mutually opposing positions with each said surface area adjacent to and parallel with each other so that a reaction chamber is formed between said wafers;

wherein said surface areas are subject to epitaxial growth within said reaction chamber; and

wherein each of said wafer holders comprises:

an opening for exposing one of said surface areas of
the wafers to said reaction chamber;

an opening flange adapted for engagement with a
20 chamfered tapered face of a whole peripheral edge of one of said
wafers on a side of said surface area thereof; ~~and~~

a plurality of jaws for detachably engaging with an
outer periphery of one of the wafers on a back surface side of
said surface area thereof;

25 a plurality of springs for respectively thrusting said
jaws toward a center of said opening; and

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detachable actuating means for locking each of said
jaws in a released position against respective thrust forces from
said springs; and

30 wherein said jaws, said springs and said detachable
actuating means are positioned only on said back surface side of
each of said wafers.

2. (Previously Presented) An epitaxial growth furnace
according to claim 1, wherein the opening flange of each of said
wafer holders is adapted to contact only with the ~~the~~ chamfered
tapered face of the whole peripheral edge of one of said wafers

5 on the side of said surface area thereof which is subject to
epitaxial growth.

3. Cancelled

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Cont
4. (Previously Presented) An epitaxial growth furnace
according to claim 2, wherein each of said jaws includes an
inclined face corresponding to the chamfered tapered face of the
peripheral edge of one of the wafers on said back surface side
thereof.

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5. (Previously Presented) An epitaxial growth furnace
according to claim 1, wherein said pair of wafer holders are
adapted for vertical arrangement of said pair of semiconductor
wafers so that the wafers are placed upright with each wafer
5 surface vertically arranged in the reaction chamber.
